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*Intelligence  
Planning*

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

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SUBJECT : Intelligence Requirements Process

1. The matrix of judgments about intelligence "requirements" has tended to operate with several unspoken assumptions. There is a need to define and include formally some additional criteria in order to arrive at a more precise and economical application of resources. The intelligence community cannot make some of the key judgments alone, and perhaps should not try to make them independently.

2. For about 25 years a great proportion of our judgments have been subtly but perceptibly influenced by the idea that, given our power and will to exert influence and "leadership" in world affairs, the U.S. would be most likely to become involved in any situation of much significance. We therefore felt the need to maintain a very large data base in order to support the widest array of options for action, should policy and decision makers choose to involve themselves and the nation in a given subject. It seems safe to say now that there is a general recognition that our relative ability to act has declined, and our will to do so is not lightly to be assumed. We will increasingly tend to examine a situation carefully before deciding whether or not we must become involved, or could advantageously take some action. And when we decide to act, we are more likely now to do so in a political or economic policy sense rather than in the kinds of material ways we often launched some years ago.

3. The definition of the factors that need to be cranked more formally into "requirements" judgments needs some study, but I suggest there are perhaps three elements: the probability of occurrence of the situation to which the requirement is linked; the relative impact on U.S. national interests of that situation; and the relative importance to the type of response the U.S. seems most likely to make of the specific information addressed in the requirement.

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4. I think it is in the interest of the intelligence community to ask for a much more specific involvement of the Executive Branch and perhaps even the Congress in making judgments about general and longer range requirements and priorities, otherwise the community must assume responsibility for making assumptions about U.S. domestic attitudes and policies which are outside its purview.

5. One can view the requirements process from a slightly different perspective in order to integrate these other factors.

6. The current intelligence operation is on the one hand like running an underground newspaper. On the other hand, the collection and "requirements" side, it is the most directly responsive to policy and decision makers, operating on current problems and in highly specific terms. These intelligence operations support the situation we are involved in, whether by choice of the nation's leadership, or as a consequence of actions of others involving U.S. interests clearly. The element that has been removed here is anticipation. We do not need to guess what the U.S. needs will be, we are being told by those responsible for guiding the enterprise. The peripheral considerations also tend to be narrow. We can see much more clearly the probable direction of events and can more concisely allocate resources for the short term. But this is not the real problem area when we speak of defining requirements, it is the longer term question dealing with anticipated needs.

7. The intelligence analyst/report producer is an encyclopedic scholar in his field. He wants to maintain the widest possible data base, and he tends to be highly situation oriented by nature: the soldier prepares for the worst battle he can envision; the economist for crash and inflation; the political scientist for apathy or revolution, etc., etc. The analyst says, to cope with X situation, we would need to know so and so. The intelligence analyst/producer should be asked to make only one principal set of judgments. Assuming the occurrence of the situation he is equipped to deal with, what is critical to know and what is advantageous? This listing and priority ordering establishes what might be called outline of the optimum data base. Being situational in nature, this could embrace wartime, peacetime, political, economic, sociological, and other kinds of problems.

8. The next level of judgment to which the intelligence community can substantially contribute is an estimate of the probability of occurrence of given situations. The general trend of the actions of others

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gives us clues: knowledge of what is under consideration in the centers of power, potential power, or potentially disruptive influences provide tip-offs. Judgments in this area of national interest are currently being reflected in documents such as the Perspectives paper, KIQs, requests for NSSMs or study papers, and the selection of topics for other in-depth intelligence reports.

9. A key related level of judgment at this point takes the intelligence community into domestic politics: will U.S. leadership or public pressures select involvement if such-and-such a situation develops? To what degree? Or do we have to be very well informed just to prove that we are very well informed, although we really don't think the U.S. needs to or will do much about it? It is on this imponderable that the intelligence community should demand greater policy guidance, pinpointing the problem and its effect on resource allocation. The alternative, now being practiced, is application of simple budgetary constraints, leaving the substantive judgments to the technicians, who then bear the burdens should national leadership take an unforeseen tack.

10. Most of the requirements documents I have seen do a fair job of relating the substance of a given informational need to several layers of increasingly generalized objectives and goals. Many of them can be "justified" or "validated" by rational discussion if certain sets of assumptions are shared, but most often the underlying assumptions are ill-defined and not necessarily common to the community as a whole.

11. Our fundamental objective should be to design a requirements system which states all the assumptions and assigns more clearly the responsibility for making concise and explicit levels of judgment. An agency or department may best be able to judge how crucial individual items may be to the performance of a given mission, if and when it is called on to perform in explicit situations. But it cannot always be sure that national leadership will assign it the same mission it plans for itself. The intelligence community should be able to offer an opinion about the probability or trend of international situations. The community may also be able to venture an opinion about U.S. involvement, but it should request the executive and/or Congress to offer an explicit indication or confirmation of the probability of a major U.S. involvement or response.

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12. Collection resources should be developed to meet the more probable involvements. Subsequent decisions about the employment of collection resources against these requirements might best be made by a high level intelligence community group including representatives of the major program managers, supported by NIO and USIB Committee expertise. This group should rarely have to meet, since ongoing evaluations by NIOs and USIB Committees would indicate desirable shifts in use of collection resources according to topic and situation, as would also the KIQ/KEP process.

13. It would seem that the really basic and broad statement of requirements would require review and endorsement only about once every two years. NSC action (i. e., tasking levied by NSC level officials, even if not always as the formal group) would give specific focus to level of operation and tasking in the interim periods. In this connection, there may be room for improvement in the technique for handling collection tasking. Policy makers quite often find a means of tasking program managers or sub-elements directly, making coherent management of resources difficult, and identification of the total workload subject to question when combined community planning is involved.



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